

30 Sept 69

Harold:

You asked for some further comment on the base of 399. I cannot add much to what I have already said until I see the base itself or another good picture of the base than the one that I have. On the basis of information contained in that picture, which is of excellent quality, it is my firm opinion that 399 lost no substance whatever at the base except in the area of the conical crater that I pointed out before.

The lumps in the base indicate only the flow of lead out the base at the time when 399 impacted with something. The same type of flow, with somewhat less disruption of the surface, is visible at the bases of Frazier's two test bullets (which were fired into cotton batting) and of Olivier's test bullet (which was fired into a goat carcass and did not strike bone). On the base of 399 ~~there is no evidence of anything~~ Roffman's picture shows no flattened areas, no striations, no evidence whatever that the base rubbed against something hard that took any substance from it. A view of the base itself or of another picture showing the base in different light might cause me to change my opinion, but as of this moment I think that 399 had lost no fragment or fragments when it reached Frazier's hands. None.

Because this matter is exceedingly important and because you want it tested in court, I urge you by all means to check carefully with others and see if you get a refutation of my opinion. If you find someone whosays that that bullet can have lost even a single fragment from any other place than the conical crater, then ask him where; when you find out, then tell me, for I can find no such place in Roffman's good photo of 399.

The flake or fragment that came off during photographing for Thompson undoubtedly came from the conical crater. In making these tiny craters, I often got little bits at the bottom of the crater or along the rim of its widest margin, bits which could easily come off just by gently rubbing the finger across the base.

Roffman's picture does not show the crack in the base very well, but I doubt whether a better photo of it would cause me to change my view, since the crack appears to be just that--a crack, and if anything came from it (I don't see how anything could) then it cannot have been bigger than a speck of dust.

I would like to have two things to fill out my information:

- (1) an unfired Western Cartridge Co. bullet, for I am not absolutely certain of the configuration of the base before firing. I could explain some physics of the lead flow if I knew what an unfired bullet looked like at the base.
- (2) Your photo of the base, both because it might contain info that I do not get out of Roffman's photo, and so that we can have ~~the same item of reference~~ the same item of reference. Either send me the photo itself for ~~reference~~ copying, or sent me the number by which the Archives designates it, so that I can get a copy from the Archives. I am now very hungry to learn all I can about the base.

Again, it is extremely important that you get the opinion of others before you have the matter tested in court. Once you are assured that the opinion is correct and irrefutable, then you can even put Frazier on the stand and have him render an opinion-- what a dance we would see then.

cc. Schomer

P.S. (over)

still,

Dick BERNABEI

P.S. I have not yet received N.O. testimony of Finck and Frayer.

I wrote to Hoch asking for it, but it has not yet arrived.